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DECEPTION.

CHICAGO:
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L. BRAUNHOLD, DEL.

DENISON'S ACTING PLAYS.

ALTA SERIES, Price 25 Cents Each, Postpaid. All Others 15 Cents Each.

	M. F.		M. F.
Ail that Glitters is not Gold, comedy, 2 acts, 2 hrs.....	6 3	On Guard, farce, 25 min.....	4 2
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Babes in Wood, burlesque, 25 m.	4 3	Odds with Enemy, 5 acts, 2 hrs....	7 4
Borrowing Trouble, farce, 20 min.	3 5	On the Brink, temperance drama, 2 acts, 2 hrs.....	12 3
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Circumlocution Office, 20 min....	6 0	Persecuted Dutchman, 35 min.....	6 3
Chimney Corner, drama, 2 acts, 1 hr., 30 min.....	5 2	Quiet Family, farce, 45 min.....	4 4
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Fair Encounter, 20 min.....	0 2	Soldier of Fortune, comedy, 5 acts, 2 hrs. 20 min.....	8 3
Family Strike, farce, 20 min.....	3 3	Seth Greenback, drama, 4 acts, 1 hr. 15 min.....	7 3
Fruits of Wine Cup, temperance drama, 3 acts, 1 hr.....	6 4	Schoolma'am (The), drama, 4 acts, 1 hr. 45 min.....	6 5
Friendly Move, sketch, 20 min....	5 0	Slasher and Crasher, 1 hr. 15 min..	5 2
Home, comedy, 3 acts, 2 hrs.....	4 3	Squeers' School, sketch, 18 min...	4 2
Homeopathy, farce, 30 min.....	5 3	Sparkling Cup, temperance drama 5 acts, 2 hrs.....	12 4
Hans Von Smash, farce, 30 min....	4 3	Taming a Tiger, farce, 20 min....	3 0
Hard Cider, temperance, 15 min.	4 2	That Rascal Pat, farce, 35 min....	3 2
Initiating a Granger, farce, 25 min.	8 0	Too Much Good Thing, 50 min....	3 6
In the Dark, farce, 25 min.....	4 2	Twenty Minutes Under an Umbrella, 20 min.....	1 1
In the Wrong House, farce, 20 m.	4 2	Two Gents in a Fix, farce, 20 min.	2 0
Irish Linen Peddler, farce, 40 min.	3 3	Two Puddifoots, farce, 40 min ..	3 3
Is the Editor In, farce, 20 min....	4 2	'Ticket of Leave Man, drama, 4 acts, 2 hrs. 45 min.....	8 3
I'll Stay Awhile, farce, 20 min....	4 0	Turn Him Out, farce, 50 min.....	3 3
Ici on Parle Francais, farce, 40 m..	4 3	Toodles, drama, 2 acts, 1 hr. 15 m.	6 2
I'm not Meself at All, farce, 25 m.	3 2	Ten Nights in a Barroom, temperance drama, 5 acts, 2 hrs...	11 5
John Smith, farce, 30 min.....	5 3	Two Ghosts in White, sketch. 25 m	0 8
Just my Luck, farce, 20 min.....	4 3	Uncle Dick's Mistake, farce, 20 m.	3 2
Kansas Immigrants, farce, 20 m...	5 1	Under the Laurels, drama, 5 acts, 1 hr. 45 min.....	5 4
Kiss in the Dark, farce, 30 m....	2 3	Wanted a Correspondent, farce, 1 h	4 4
Louva the Pauper, drama, 5 acts, 1 hr. 45 min.....	9 4	Wide Enough for Two, farce, 50 m	5 2
Love and Rain, 20 min.....	1 1	Which Will He Marry farce, 30 m	2 8
Larkins' Love Letters, farce, 50 m.	3 2	Won at Last, comedy, 3 acts, 1 hr. 45 m	7 3
Lady of Lyons, 1 acts. 2 hrs. 30 m.	8 4	Wonderful Letter, farce, 25 min..	4 1
Limerick Boy, farce, 30 min.....	5 2	Women of Lowenburg, historical sketch, 5 scenes, 50 min.....	10 10
Lost in London. drama, 3 acts, 1 h. 45 min....	6 3	Wooing Under Difficulties, 35 min.	4 3
London Assurance, comedy, 5 acts, 2 hrs. 30 min.....	9 3	Yankee Detective, 3 acts, 2 hrs ...	8 3
Lucky Sixpence, farce, 30 min....	4 2		
Lucy's Old Man, sketch, 15 min..	2 3	ALTA SERIES—25c. each.	
Michael Erle, drama, 2 acts, 1 hr. 30 min.....	8 3	Beggar Venus, play, 2 hrs. 30 min.	6 4
Mike Donovan, 1 farce, 15 min...	1 3	Early Vows, comedy, 1 hr.....	4 2
Mitsu-Yu Nissi, Japanese Wedding, 1 hr. 15 min.....	6 6	From Sumter to Appomattox, military play, 2 hrs. 30 min	6 2
Model of a Wife, farce, 25 min....	3 2	Shadow Castle, play, 2 hrs. 30 min.	5 4
Movement Cure, farce, 15 min....	5 0	Jedediah Judkins, J. P., comedy, 2 hrs. 30 m.....	7 5
Mrs Gamp's Tea, sketch, 15 min.	0 2		
Misses Beers, farce, 25 min.	3 3		
My Wife's Relations, comedy, 1 hr	4 0		
My Jeremiah, farce, 20 min.....	3 2		
My Turn Next, farce, 50 min....	4 3		
My Neighbor's Wife, farce, 45 min	3 3		
Not Such a Fool as He Looks, comedy, 3 acts, 2 hrs.....	5 3		

T. S. DENISON, Publisher, 163 Randolph St., Chicago.

DECEPTION

AN ORIGINAL FARCE

IN ONE ACT

By CHARLES TOWNSEND.

AUTHOR OF "BORDER LAND," "RIO GRANDE," "SPY OF GETTYSBURG,"
"THE WOVEN WEB," "EARLY VOWS," "BROKEN FETTERS," "A BREEZY
CALL," "ON GUARD," "UNDER A CLOUD," "THE MAN IN BLACK,"
"THE DOCTOR," "WONDERFUL LETTER," "MISS MADCAP,"
"SECRET SERVICE," "THE PRAIRIE SCOUT," "IRON
HAND," "A LOYAL FRIEND," ETC., ETC., ETC.

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163 RANDOLPH STREET.

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COSTUMES.

JOHN EARLY.—Age, 25; dark, cut-away suit, rather shabby; face pale, chin lightly touched with blue for unshaven look. *Second Entrance*—Neat Prince Albert suit of black; clean collar and cuffs; face smoothly shaven.

MR. MERRIMAN.—Age, 55; hair tinged with gray; quick and incisive in manner; Prince Albert suit; overcoat, silk hat and gloves to put on and wear for second entrance; wears watch.

MR. JOHN EARLY.—Age, 44; half-bald, red wig; red face; loud and vulgar in attire and manner; has old-fashioned carpet bag, for second entrance, containing bundle of letters; wears heavy overcoat.

DENNIS.—Age, 55; street dress; overcoat, cap; muffler and gloves at first entrance.

MRS. MERRIMAN.—Age about 50; hair slightly gray; quiet house dress.

CARRIE.—Age about 20; neat house dress.

PROPERTIES.

(See also "Scenery" and "Costumes.")

Several small packages and newspapers for DENNIS; letter on table; pocket flask for DENNIS; bell to ring outside; large old-fashioned carpet bag containing bundle of letters for MR. JOHN; two guns.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R means right and *L* left of person facing the audience. *C* is center of stage. *Up stage* is toward the rear; *Down stage* is toward the footlights.

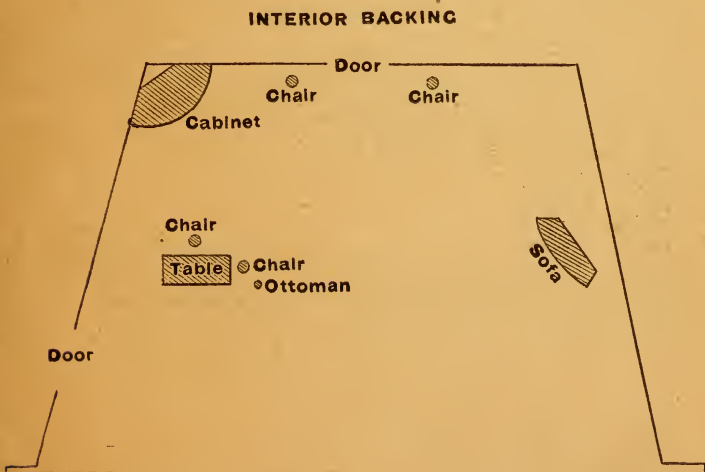
DECEPTION.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

JOHN EARLY, the Wanderer.....*Light Comedy Lead.*
MR. MERRIMAN, a Rich, Eccentric New Yorker.....*Old Man.*
MR. JOHN EARLY, "Esq.," who came too late.....*Character Comedy.*
DENNIS DUFFY, a Trusty Servant.....*Low Comedy.*
MRS. MERRIMAN, a Model Mother.....*Old Woman.*
CARRIE, her Daughter.....*Juvenile Lady.*

TIME OF REPRESENTATION, THIRTY MINUTES.

SCENERY.



SCENE.—Sitting room in fourth grooves. Interior backing. Doors *C* in flat and *R 2 E*. Closed in. Carpet down; sofa *L*; cabinet *R*, chairs *R C* and *L C*, on flat; handsome table, two chairs and ottoman, *R C*.

Note.—Though this play contains regular stage directions it may be played in any ordinary room.

DECEPTION.

SCENE.—*Elegantly furnished room in 4th grooves. At rise of curtain.*

Enter DENNIS C. D., carrying several packages.

DEN. Here I am sir, bad luck to the cowld (*looks about*). Begorry! It's to the wind alone I'm sphakin! Faith an' it's a stinger shure this mornin'. The thermomater is at laste twinty degray's below Missouri. Let me say: (*looks over packages*) There's the sky-grane yarn for Miss Carrie, God bless her heart, to make poodle dogs on a tidy wid, an' the love story, bless her shwate face how she swallows 'em, an' the book of sarmons for the ould leddy, an' the mornin' noospaper for the ould mon, divil take him, (*lays each article on table as he speaks*) an' that's all. An' now I suppose I may as well go out an' go for that snow bank agin. Faith, doorin' the past wake I've wore meself to skin an' bones doin' nothin' but shovel snow an' ate an' shlape. Begorry, I fargot! There's a poor shiverin' divil down thare in the alley way, I'll give him the job for a dime, an' I'll stand inside the dure an' do the bossin' (*turns and collides with MR. MERRIMAN, who enters C. D.*)

Mr. M. That's right, you bog trotter! Run all over me.

DEN. Yes, sor.

Mr. M. What!

DEN. No, sor.

Mr. M. Get out!

DEN. Yes, sir.

(Exit C. D.)

Mr. M. Confound him! I sometimes feel that it would be justifiable homicide to slaughter that fellow. (*Picks up letter from table.*) Hello! Another letter from John; (*reads*) "We'll be there without fail to-morrow morning." Why, this letter was written yesterday. To-morrow is to-day.

Enter MRS. MERRIMAN and CARRIE, R. 2 E.

Mrs. M. What nonsense are you talking?

Mr. M. Nonsense? I never talk nonsense.

Mrs. M. Oh, yes, you do.

Mr. M. I say, I don't.

Mrs. M. You said that to-morrow is to-day.

Mr. M. You're crazy. John Early wrote yesterday from Boston, that he would be here to-morrow. Therefore, I say again, that to-day is to-morrow.

Mrs. M. Worse and worse.

Mr. M. Carrie, my dear, bring my overcoat and hat, will you please?

CARRIE. All right, papa.

(Exit C. D.)

Mrs. M. Where are you going?

Mr. M. To meet John at the station.

Mrs. M. The dear boy; do you think you will know him?

Enter CARRIE, C. D. with overcoat and hat.

Mr. M. (*putting on overcoat*). Know him? Know him? I'd know him a mile off.

Mrs. M. But you never saw him.

Mr. M. True enough; but if he is anything like his father—I say, come, come! Where's my overcoat?

CARRIE (*laughing*). Why, papa, you have it on.

Mr. M. True enough; I forgot (*puts on hat*). Look your prettiest my dear, for John, I'm sure is a charming fellow. Well, well, where's my hat?

Mrs. M. Your hat?

Mr. M. Come, come! Don't keep me waiting!

CARRIE. Oh, papa, feel of your head!

Mr. M. Eh? Oh, yes, to be sure (*puts on gloves*). You see I am in such a hurry to meet John. Well, good-bye, good-bye. I'm off (*looks at watch*). Bless my soul, the train is due in ten minutes. (*Exit C. D.*)

CARRIE. Ha, ha, ha! Papa would lose his head if it were not fastened on.

Mrs. M. I don't wonder at his excitement; he is so anxious to see Mr. Early.

CARRIE. Now, tell me all about him. (*They sit; Mrs. M. in chair, CARRIE on ottoman at her feet.*)

Mrs. M. There is very little to tell; John Early is the son of an old friend—one who gave your father a start in commercial life. I never saw him, as he lived abroad for many years. He returned to America just before his death. Your father heard that his son was in Boston, wrote him, and to-day he is coming to visit us.

CARRIE. From Boston! Oh, dear. Then I suppose he goes in for Emerson, Browning, base ball, prize fighting, baked beans and other disagreeable things.

Mrs. M. Good gracious! I hope not.

CARRIE. So do I, for I intend to like him ever so much.

Mrs. M. That will please your father beyond measure.

CARRIE. Ah! (*Shaking finger at Mrs. M.*) I see your little plot. Papa wants to marry me to this interesting young man.

Mrs. M. You must marry some time, I suppose, and we should be delighted if you are—

Enter DENNIS C. D.

DEN. I ax yer pardon mem, but it's cowl'd in the hall below, an' may I bring him here?

Mrs. M. Him? Who do you mean?

DEN. The man—the gintlemin, mem—what's been helpin' me to shovel off the shnow.

CARRIE. The gentleman?

DEN. That's what he is miss, ivery inch av him, though he do be

in reduced circumstances. He's all in a shiver out there wid nary an overcoat or glove on.

CARRIE. Poor fellow, and in this freezing weather.

Mrs. M. Bring him in, certainly.

DEN. Thank ye, mem.

(Exit C. D.)

CARRIE. I wonder what he is like?

Mrs. M. A tramp no doubt, although Dennis is a pretty good judge of human nature.

Enter DENNIS and JOHN, C. D.

DEN. It's all roight sir—the leddies bid me call yez.

JOHN. But my good fellow I am not exactly a parlor ornament.

DEN. Av coorse not; but they don't want ye for a piece av brick-a-brake.

Mrs. M. You are welcome sir. Pray be seated.

JOHN. Thank you, madame—I—I— (*reels, and is caught in DENNIS' arms, who helps to seat*).

CARRIE. Poor man. He is overcome with the cold.

DEN. More likely it's starvation.

Mrs. M. Run and get some wine, Dennis.

DEN. Wine is it? Excuse me, mem (*takes flask from pocket*.) Have some o' this sor, it's rale ould Monongehaly.

JOHN (*takes swallow*). Thank you. That's enough. The warm air of the room overcame me.

DEN, (*to Mrs. M.*) I belave he's starvin' mem.

Mrs. M. Good gracious! Get him something to eat.

DEN, (*to JOHN*). Excuse me sor, but cud yez ate a bit now?

JOHN. Perhaps so (*aside*). I could eat a cow!

DEN. Then come wid me to the dinin' room.

JOHN. Thank you, (*arises*) ladies—your servant, (*bows and follows DENNIS out C. D.*)

CARRIE. Dennis was right, he is a gentleman.

Mrs. M. No doubt of that.

CARRIE. And think of his being poor, cold and hungry in a great city like this. It's a shame.

Enter MR. MERRIMAN, quickly C. D.

Mr. M. Of course it's a shame—condemn the luck.

CARRIE. What is the matter, papa?

Mr. M. Matter? Matter enough. I just happened to remember that I'd forgotten to wind my watch. It's run down and I've been running a wild goose chase. The Boston train came in half an hour ago (*throws off hat and overcoat*).

CARRIE. Then you missed him?

Mr. M. Yes, miss, I missed him.

CARRIE. Oh!

Mr. M. Has he arrived?

Mrs. M. Who?

Mr. M. (*disgusted*). Oh, the king of the Cannibal Islands of course! Now, whom do you suppose I meant?

Mrs. M. Well, if you will cool down—

Mr. M. Cool down, cool down! Do you think I'm hot, when the thermometer is fifty below zero.

CARRIE. Mr. Early has not yet arrived—if that is what you wish to know.

Mr. M. All right; he'll come when he gets here. I mean he'll arrive when he comes—er—where's that confounded Dennis?

Mrs. M. He is in the dining-room, getting luncheon—

Mr. M. Getting luncheon? Great Alexander! Does that fellow do nothing but eat?

CARRIE. It is not for himself, papa.

Mr. M. Indeed? For whom then?

Mrs. M. For the poor gentleman.

Mr. M. What poor gentleman? Are you making my house an asylum for all the tramps in New York?

CARRIE. He is not a tramp; and even if he were, you would be the first one to help him.

Mrs. M. Indeed he would, for he would not turn a hungry dog from his door.

Mr. M. Yes, I would; yes, I would; I'm a regular, hardened, dyed-in-the-wool old sinner. (*Tenderly.*) God bless you both. Do you think I was in earnest? No! While I have a roof above me, no hungry creature shall be turned away.

Mrs. M. That's right, Simon.

Mr. M. Right? No, it isn't. It's all wrong and I'm a soft-headed old fool. (*Sits at the table L.*) But where the Dickens is that John Early? Confound the fellow, I don't believe he is coming at all.

Enter JOHN and DENNIS C. D.

JOHN (*to DENNIS*). I am much obliged to you.

DEN. Don't mention it sor.

JOHN. Ladies, how can I ever thank you for your kindness to a wretched wanderer like myself?

Mrs. M. We have only done our duty, sir.

CARRIE. Papa, this is the gentleman.

Mr. M. (*turning in chair*) Eh? Well, confound you, sir, I—(*pauses, looks at JOHN closely.*) Well, I'll be hanged! (*Rushes to John; shakes his hand.*) When did you arrive? Where have you been? Why John Early, my dear boy, how are you? (*General amazement.*)

CARRIE. John Early?

Mrs. M. *He* John Early?

DEN. John Early? Begorry, sor, why he's the man—I mane the gentleman, sor—what helped me shovel off the shnow.

Mr. M. So that was your little game, eh? Oh, you sly young rascal! Wanted to take us by surprise, eh? Thought I wouldn't know you, eh? Oh, you precious young scallawag! Here (*to the ladies*) allow me; this is John Early, the son of his blessed old father; and he's come to live and die with us. Dennis, you scoundrel, clear out!

DEN. (*aside*). Begorry, it bates the divil! (*Exit C. D.*)

JOHN (*amazed*). But really, my dear sir, I—

Mr. M. There, there, there! Don't try to explain. I'll forgive you. (*Slaps his back.*) Oh, you jolly dog. As if I could ever forget the image of your dear old father.

JOHN. But, really I must say—

Mr. M. Sit down, sit down, confound you. (*Forces JOHN into seat.*)
Come, Mrs. Merriman, let's see that John's room is all in order.

Mrs. M. Very well. Carrie, you will entertain Mr. Early? (*Exit C. D.*)

CARRIE. Yes, ma'ma.

Mr. M. (*aside to JOHN.*) Nice little girl that, eh? Kee! (*Pokes JOHN in the ribs.*) It's all right, you know. (*At C. D.*) Oh, you rascal (*Exit C. D.*)

JOHN (*aside*). I wonder what's the matter with him?

CARRIE (*aside*). He *is* nice, anyhow. He looks just like a poet, or a robber, or something.

JOHN (*rising*). Miss, I hope you'll allow me to explain—

CARRIE. Please don't. It was an awfully funny joke clearing away that snow.

JOHN (*aside*). Joke? I saw nothing funny in it.

CARRIE. Papa had such a job hunting you up.

JOHN. Yes? (*aside*) The mischief he did! (*They sit.*)

CARRIE. He has spoken of you so much that I feel as if we were old friends.

JOHN. Thank you. But you see, miss, there is a mistake here.

CARRIE. Certainly; it was a great mistake to hide from us so long.

JOHN. Hide? (*aside*) Poor thing, she must be crazy.

CARRIE. But perhaps your father had forgotten his old friends—you lived so long abroad.

JOHN (*aside*). Now, how does she know that?

Enter MR. MERRIMAN, C. D.

Mr. M. (*aside*) Ah, there they are—billing and cooing already (*aloud*). Sorry to interrupt, my dear, but your mother wants you.

CARRIE. Very well. Will you excuse me?

JOHN (*rising and bowing*) With regret.

CARRIE (*at R. 2 E.*) I *know* I'm going to like him ever so much. (*Exit.*)

Mr. M. Your room is ready, my boy, and—e'r—by the way, let me have your checks.

JOHN. Checks?

Mr. M. Yes, and I'll send for your baggage.

JOHN. Baggage? I haven't any. You see I—that is my—

Mr. M. I understand.

JOHN (*aside*). I wish I did.

Mr. M. Your father died poor, eh? I am sure it was no fault of his. I owe my whole start in life to him, and shall pay you the debt with interest. Excuse me now for a few moments, I have a letter to write, but I'll join you directly (*at R. 2 E.*) Make yourself at home. (*Exit R. 2 E.*)

JOHN. Am I drunk or dreaming? This amiable old lunatic thinks he knows me, yet I am positive that I never saw nor heard of him before. Let me see (*sits R.*) My father died some months ago, leaving me a good name—and some debts. I reached the city this morning a financial wreck. I am hired by a liberal son of Erin to shovel the beautiful snow, and after that am invited into the house. Behold the

result! I am called by name, slapped on the back, called a jolly dog, and introduced to the prettiest girl in New York. It's a clear case of mistaken identity, or else—by Jove! Perhaps I have stumbled on a private lunatic asylum! I have tried to explain, but they won't hear me. What shall I do? Oh, I must tell them, of course. This deception will never do. And yet—hang it all! It's only a joke. I'll let it go on a little while longer, anyhow.

Enter MR. MERRIMAN, R. 2 E.

MR. M. All right, my boy. Now, if you choose, I will show you to your room, where you can tidy yourself up a bit.

JOHN. Thank you sir. (Mr. M *exit C. D.*, JOHN *pauses. Aside.*)
John Early, you're a confounded humbug! (Exit C. D.)

Enter DENNIS, R. 2 E.

DEN. This is be all manes the quarest world I iver lived into, so it is. Now, jist luk at it. I mates a poor, hungry luckin' divil this marning shiverin' loike as if he'd set straddle av an iceberg all noight. I gives him a bit av a job an' he sames moighty glad to get it. Then I axes him to come in till the house an' warm up. Au' begorry, no sooner is he inside the dure than it's cock-a-doodle-do, an' he flies to the top o' the fence, the biggest toad in the puddle.

Enter MR. EARLY, quickly, C. D.

MR. E. Hello!

DEN. Great Scott, on a porous plaster! Where did ye drop from?

MR. E. Where d' ye s'pose? Think I snowed down, say?

DEN. No, but I thought ye moight hev escaped from a lunatical asylum, or a dime musayum.

MR. E. Wall b' gosh, I didn't. Say, be you Mr. Merriman?

DEN. No, sor.

MR. E. Yer haint?

DEN. I aint.

MR. E. Be you *Mrs.* Merriman!

DEN. Sor! Do yez want to insult me?

MR. E. Oh, no. Course not. Say, I want to see some of the family.

DEN. What do yez want o' thim?

MR. E. That's my affair. Whar be they?

DEN. That's my affair.

MR. E. Eh?

DEN. Do yez hear wid yer elbows, ye red-hidded ould duffer?

MR. E. Who yer callin' red-headed—you flannel-mouthed son of a tater patch?

DEN. Look a here. Who air ye, onyhow, Mr.—Mr.—

MR. E. (*pompously*). Mr. John Early, Esq.

DEN. Eh?

MR. E. Mr. John Early, Esq., d'ye hear, an' I tell yer I'm a-goin' ter see Mr. Merriman.

DEN. Well, *Mr.* John Early, *Esq.*, as a friend, I advise ye to roight about face an' git out. We've got one John Early here now, an' we haven't ony room for anither wan, spacially such a bum looking rhooster as yersilf.

Mr. E. Hey! What? A fellow here already a callin' of hisself John Early? He's a fraud, a cheat, a liar. a—

DEN. Aisy now! Be afther closin' up that hole in yer face av ye hope to carry it home in safety.

Mr. E. You needn't talk ter me. Who be you?

DEN. *Mr. Dennis Duffy, Esq.*, is who I om, an' I kin spi'e yer ugly mug in jist wan lick o' me fist, so I kin.

Mr. E. (*retreats, frightened*). I—I didn't mean nothin'.

DEN. Begorry, ye haven't brains enough to mane onything.

Mr. E. But please *do* let me see Mr. Merriman, 'cos I'm goin' ter marry his darter.

DEN. Marry the aunt o' great grandmother's favorite cousin. Av she marries onybody I do be thinkin' it'll be John Early.

Mr. E. But, gol durn the luck, I tell you *I'm* him.

DEN. Git out! Do you see onything grane in me eye?

Mr. E. I don't keer. *I be* John Early, and I kin prove it. I've got all ther letters Mr. Merriman rit me to Bosting in my valise to the depot, and I'll go right back an' git em too, an' I'll show this ere swindler up in his true colors, gol durn him, see if I don't! (*At C. D.* Say, is he a big fellow?

DEN. Big onough to brake yer face wid his wan hand.

Mr. E. I don't keer. I'll be back quicker'n greased lightnin', an' then I'll tell him what's what. (*Exit C. D.*

DEN. I wonder av there's is ony more like him in Boston? Av it be so, I don't blame the young women fer bein' old maids. What was he talkin' about onyhow? It would be a moighty strange coincidence av thare be two o' them. Faith I'll go down shtairs an' think it over. (*Exit R. 2 E.*

Enter JOHN, C. D. neatly dressed and shaven.

JOHN. Richard is himself again—for a short time. I feel like a pickpocket just the same. John Early, it is my private opinion, that you are a scoundrel. Yes, you are. Have you no sense of honor, you good-for-nothing wretch? You are getting yourself into a pretty scrape. Suppose the real, simon pure John should arrive at any moment, as he is liable to do? A nice trap you would be in. The best thing you can do is to get out of this at once. But how? Ah, there's the rub! Confess that it is a mistake, make a fool of myself, and get kicked out for my pains? By Jove! That's a lovely girl. I'll stay and face the music.

Enter MR. MERRIMAN, C. D.

Mr. M. There, my dear fellow—you look like another man. Come, sit down and we'll talk a little business. In the first place, how do you like it here?

JOHN. Oh,—first rate.

Mr. M. How do I strike you?

JOHN. Most favorably, sir. (*aside.*) He'll strike me with the toe of his boot directly.

Mr. M. I'm glad that you're favorably impressed. I'm a rough old chestnut outside, but I try to keep my heart warm. And say—between us privately—how do you like Carrie?

JOHN. She is perfection itself.

Mr. M. Knew you would think so. Yes, sir. Bless her heart, she's her father's own girl. And she is greatly pleased with you, too, so we may as well consider that settled.

JOHN. Settled?

Mr. M. Of course. And as soon as you and Carrie are married—

JOHN. Married? Why—I say—oh, come now—that's a little *too* sudden.

Mr. M. Sudden? Why, it was a foregone conclusion, you know.

JOHN. To be sure—but—(*aside*) good lord! What a mess!

Mr. M. When I can take you by the hand and call you son-in law, I shall be the happiest old fellow living; happy for your own sake, and twice happy that my little girl has found s, worthy a husband.

JOHN. You overpower me, sir. (*aside.*) I can't endure much of this.

Mr. M. • Tush! Stop such nonsense. Do you think my memory is so poor that I have forgotten how your father pulled me out of the gutter thirty years ago and made a man of me? No, sir.

Enter DENNIS, R. 2 E.

DEN. Hev yu seen him sor?

Mr. M. Who?

DEN. The maniac.

Mr. M. What maniac?

DEN. The stark starin', maniacal, lunitical lunatic.

Enter MRS. MERRIMAN and CARRIE, C. D.

Mr. M. Who the devil is he?

DEN. That's the quarest part av it all. He said as how his name was Mr. John Early, an'—

ALL (*astonished*). Mr. John Early?

DEN. That he did, begorry. An' moreover besides he said as how he'd come from Boston to marry yer daughter—

Mr. M. Marry the deuce!

DEN. No, sor—marry Miss Carrie.

JOHN (*aside*). I'm in for it!

CARRIE. To marry me?

DEN. Yersilf, miss.

Mrs. M. And then what?

DEN. An' thin I tould him that Mr. John was here already.

JOHN! You did?

DEN. I did. An' thin he jumped up an' cracked his hales together three toimes an' called ye a thafe an' a liar an' a blackguyard an'—

JOHN. And then you punched his head?

Mr. M. And kicked him out?

DEN. Begorry I tould him I cud an' I wud, an' he rushed aff, sayin' he was goin' to the daypo for a bag full o' proofs.

JOHN (*aside*). The earthquake has come—now for the deluge.

Mrs. M. What does it mean? (*Bell rings violently*)

DEN. (*at C. D.*) It means he's come. The girl has let him in. Look out now everybody.

CARRIE (*runs to John*). Oh, I'm so frightened.

JOHN (*soothing her*). There's no danger.

Enter MR. E. with a carpetbag, C. D. He is out of breath.

MR. E. (*to John*). Be—be you Mr. Merriman?

JOHN (*with dignity*). No, sir.

MR. E. (*to Carrie*). Be—be you Mrs. Merriman?

CARRIE. No, sir.

MR. M. I am Mr. Merriman.

MR. E. You be?

MR. M. I am.

MR. E. Be you got a darter?

MR. M. I have a daughter.

MR. E. Yu hev?

MR. M. (*shortly*). I have!

MR. E. (*pointing to Mrs. M.*) Be she her?

MR. M. (*very short*). No.

MR. E. She haint?

MR. M. (*shouting*). No, she hain't! Who are you, sir, and what do you want?

MR. E. Say, be thar a feller here a callin' of hissilf John Early?

JOHN. Yes, sir, there is.

MR. E. Be you him?

MR. M. No—confound you!

JOHN. I am John Early, (*bows*) at your service.

MR. E. Yer a liar.

JOHN (*knocks him down*). You are a fool!

MR. E. (*rising*). I'm a fool be I? Wall, I don't take no insults from nobody I don't. Choose yer time an' place, sir—choose 'em.

JOHN. For what purpose?

MR. E. To fight, sir—to fight.

JOHN (*pulling up sleeves, and striking attitude*). All right, sir, all right. Come on.

MR. E. A duel, sir.

JOHN. Eh? A duel?

MR. E. To the death!

JOHN. Well, if we must fight—

MR. E. We must—my blood's biling.

JOHN. If we must fight, what will you have—swords, pistols, dynamite, Indiana whiskey or rifled cannon?

MR. E. I don't care a red cent.

JOHN. Dennis!

DEN. Yis sor.

JOHN. Any weapons about the house?

DEN. Yis sor. I have a couple av ould muskets.

JOHN. Bring them here.

DEN. Yis sor. (*Going, C.*)

JOHN. And Dennis!

DEN. (*at C. D.*) Yis sor.

JOHN. Are they loaded?

DEN. Yis sor. (*Exits C. D.*)

MR. M. Oh dear!

CARRIE. Oh John!

Mr. E. Oh lord!

Mr. M. What are you going to do?

JOHN. I am going to have satisfaction—to revenge insulted honor—to *kill* that ancient, antique traducer!

Mr. E. Be—be—be you in arnest?

JOHN. Am I in earnest? Ah, you shall see (*at C. D.*). Dennis! Dennis!

DEN. (*outside*) Comin' sor, comin'.

JOHN. Hurry up! My brain is on fire! I thirst, I pant for blood!

Mr. E. (*aside*) Oh my gosh, I'm a goner!

JOHN (*calls*). Dennis! (*Comes down R.*)

DEN. (*outside*) Here I om!

Enter DENNIS, C. D. with gun over each shoulder. Marches down C., halts, turns, marches to JOHN, halts, gives him one gun, marches to MR. EARLY, halts, thumps gun down on floor.

Mr. E. (*jumping about on one foot*). Oh—h! Ouch! Gol darn ye!

DEN. What throubles ye?

Mr. E. My foot, oh my foot! Blast yer blamed ole gun!

JOHN. Come, come, my dear sir—never mind a little thing like that.

Mr. E. (*holding up foot*). Do you call that a little thing?

DEN. Begorry yer roight! It's a number twilve!

JOHN. Come now, are you all ready? (*aims*) One—two—three—

Mr. E. (*frightened*). Whoo! Murder!

Mrs. M. Surely, John, you won't—

JOHN. Yes, I will. Don't stop me now. Ah, you villifying old villain! Ready!

Mr. E. I don't wanter fi—fi—fight.

JOHN. Not fight? Aye, but you must. You have roused the sleeping lion, and he roars for gore! Come on.

Mr. E. D—d—don't pint yer blamed ole gun this way; she might go off. I c—c—can't fight. I'm not a fightin' man. I take it all back. I beg yer pardon fer knockin' me down. I didn't mean nothin', an' I— (*JOHN points gun, MR. E. kneels.*) Wow! Don't shoot!

JOHN. Enough. Dennis!

DEN. Sor?

JOHN. Remove the implements of death and destruction.

DEN. An' ain't ye goin' ter plug the son av a gun?

JOHN. No. He shall live.

DEN. All roight.

(*Exit with guns C. D.*)

Mr. M. What does all this mean, anyhow? (*MR. E. rises.*)

Mr. E. Blest if I know. You rit me letters axin' me ter come on here, an' hintin' as how I was ter marry yer darter, an'—

Mr. M. I wrote you?

Mr. E. Yis yer did, an' here's the letters be ter prove it (*takes letters from carpet bag*).

Mr. M. (*taking them*). My letters, sure enough. How came you by them?

Mr. D. Why, you rit 'em to me of course.

Mr. M. I did not, sir. I wrote these letters to that gentleman—Mr. John Early.

Mr. E. That's jest who I am.

Mr. M. You're nothing of the sort.

Mr. E. Ain't I? Then why did you write ter me? How did I git yer letters? How did I answer 'em?

Mr. M. Did *you* answer them?

Mr. E. 'Course I did (*aside*). Got another feller to write 'em.

CARRIE. John, can you, *will* you explain this mystery?

JOHN (*gravely*). Yes, Carrie, I can and will—although I blush with shame to think of doing so.

CARRIE. You, John?

JOHN. Yes, I. Listen. This morning I came to your house a peniless, homeless man. I was hungry, starving, wretched. Through some blind error I was welcomed as a friend. Yielding to a momentary impulse I resolved to act a lie—to assume a station not my own.

Mr. E. Jest what I said! He's a fraud. a—

Mr. M. (*fiercely*). Will you be quiet! (Mr. E. *tumbles into seat*.)

JOHN. At first I endeavored to correct the mistake, but failing in that I let the lie go on.

Mr. E. (*rising*). 'Course he did. He's a swindler an' a—

Mr. M. (*shouting*). Shut up! (Mr. E. *collapses*.)

JOHN. It was a strange mistake, for you seemed to know me well—yet I am none the less to blame.

Mr. E. (*rising*). 'Course he ain't. He orter be arrested an'—

Mr. M. (*forcing Mr. E. into chair*). Hang you! If you open your mouth again I'll make you swallow it!

JOHN. You were all so kind, so thoughtful, so generous, that the shame of my deception is doubly bitter. I have wronged you all, and deserve any punishment you may inflict.

Mr. M. Ahem! A strange story—a very strange story. Are you not John Early?

JOHN. That is my name.

Mr. E. Mine too! (Mr. M. *whirls and looks at him*. He *collapses*.)

Mr. M. Let me see—how old are you, John?

JOHN. Twenty-five.

Mr. M. Ah! And you, sir?

Mr. E. Forty-four year. come next grass.

Mr. M. (*to JOHN*). And your father never spoke of me?

JOHN. Not that I remember.

Mr. M. Where have you been since he died?

JOHN. Traveling.

Mr. M. (*to Mr. E*). And *you* live—

Mr. E. In Bosting, o' course.

Mr. M. Thank you (*to JOHN*). You were in Boston on your return from abroad?

JOHN. Yes.

Mr. M. Bravo! The mystery is solved. I heard that you were in Boston and wrote you there; but my letters, it seems, fell into the hands of this disreputable dog.

Mr. E. (*rising*). Now look here, sir. I—

Mr. M. Sit down! (*He sits*.) I'll attend to you directly. Chance brought you here, my boy, and I recognized you at once, for you

resemble your father to the life. You are *the* John Early—*our* own John—and that precious old scamp is the real impostor.

Enter DENNIS, C. D.

Dennis, take this fellow by the collar and show him out.

DEN. Faith, an' I will, sir. There's yer ould hat an' grip (*gives them to Mr. E.*). Now, come on wid ye.

Mr. M. And Dennis!

DEN. (*at C. D.*) Yis sor.

Mr. M. If your foot should slip—you understand?

DEN. Don't I though! Ah—h! (*shakes foot*). Come on wid ye. (*Runs Mr. E. out, C. D.*)

JOHN. Then I am forgiven?

CARRIE. Fully and freely.

JOHN. In that case then let us venture to hope that our kind friends, who have so patiently followed our fortunes to-night, will one and all freely forgive this bit of DECEPTION.

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